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the only way to win this precious metal is to dig for it until it reveals itself and then to wash away all its impurities.

Yet as soon as they have succeeded in drawing to light the manifold decorative beauties inherent to this country, as soon as they have learned to apply them to the enhancement of our every day life, the great American artists will rise from the American population, that is, those who have two or three generations of American-born ancestors. Those men will reveal, in a few flashes of genius, the characteristics of American art, that until then will lie slumbering in the depth of our social strata. It would be naturally unfair to ask of these future artists to confine themselves solely to American subjects, but they will most likely prefer them for the sake of their originality. For to transform the free, wild spirit of our vast domain into works of lasting beauty is perhaps the most ambitious task a native genius can set itself.

#### A BOSTON ARTIST.

F. H. TOMPKINS.

At the beginning of this century German painting was in its infancy. The Classicists and so called Nazarener, Cornelius, Veit, Overbeck, Carstens, etc., drew and painted the most gigantic cartoons and frescoes without any knowledge of drawing a head or a hand correctly after nature. Like children they sought to grasp the stars. "You are artists," exclaimed King Ludwig in a poem dedicated to them, "because you are Christians." And true enough, their grandiose combination of classic and christian ideas constitutes their sole claim to the title of artists, for not one of them recognized their unpardonable blunders in drawing, their contortions of bones and muscles, not to mention their crudeness of color. Not one saw nature as she really was.

Left to itself German art would hardly have overcome these amateurish efforts with such facility had not an Ingres, a Géricault, a Delacroix and Delaroche couched the cataract and taught German painters to see with filmless eyes. With Schadaw the first director of the Düsseldorf school, German art became a pupil of nature. Düsseldorf grew the centre of German art life and the romantics and Hildebrandt, Lessing, Sohn, Bendemann, were a few of those who were at times true to nature. Another beneficial influence was exercised by the masterpieces of the Belgians, Wappers and Gallait, which were exhibited all over Germany in the forties. It was these pictures which taught Piloty to lead German art to the threshold of independent mastership. Like no other before him he urged the study of nature and succeeded in

convincing the young generation of the necessity of correct draughtsmanship.

So the Munich School under Piloty's guidance eventually ousted Düsseldorf; young talents from all parts of the world flocked to the new prophet and sorcerer to learn from him all his brilliant tricks, in short, all that a master can communicate to his pupils.

Thus the magnificent epoch of German art of the sixties and seventies developed under the Piloty school, which matured a number of painters of the first rank, such as Makart, Max, Lenbach, Defregger; these masters, aside of great naturalistic abilities, all understand how to stamp upon their work the individuality of genius.

However, they had not as yet reached that grade of perfection which would put their technique on a level with that of the old masters. They were not as yet free from mannerisms, only to mention the monotony of brown in their shadows. They had still to do away with the last traces of pedantic work. The one destined to take this last step was Ludwig Löfftz, at present the president of the Munich Academy.

His "Pieta" in 1883 (now in the Pinakothek) was a revelation of the height to which German technique had advanced. To attain this perfection, the master had neglected everything which might possibly hinder the most exact representation of nature. The composition, the idea, the dramatic interest, in which the Piloty school had excelled were sacrificed. Löfftz simply posed a nude man on the floor and copied him indefatigably, conscientiously scraping from his canvass what was not true to nature until he finally succeeded after three years' work.

A knowledge of all these details is essential in forming a just estimate of F. H. Tompkins' paintings, belonging as they do to the best work the Löfftz school has hitherto produced. The majority of the Löfftz pupils adhere to the master's idea. They avoid all themes which would exercise the inventive and imaginative powers, their pictures lack all elaborate composition, their figures neither pose nor show emotion and excitement, their faces are void of any dramatic expression; they merely paint nature and the model as they find them.

Tompkins' differs from these in some respects. Though his technique betrays their leading characteristics: correct judgement, simplicity of composition, sureness of lines, forcible modeling, firm unobtrusive brushwork, natural though rather sombre and at times muddy coloring and a clever handling of conflicting lights - his principal endeavor is after all to express some feeling, a vibration of the soul, individual to himself.

His first important picture "The Worshippers," showed this tendency. It represented a German girl in plain black, standing tall and erect in a serious and devout attitude in a church pew, beside an old woman attired in a veil and checkered shawl.

Löfftz who is rather chary of praise remarked

about this picture: "Gabriel Max could not paint such a hand but he could paint a better picture."

In a number of pictures expressing vague sentiments, as indicated by the titles "Revery," "Memory," "Souvenir," etc., representing young girls (painted after lady models) he is not seen to best advantage. He is not psychologist enough to render these delicate, poetical moods of a woman's character sufficiently interesting. The material element predominates in these pictures, (he is by far more successful in depicting the prosaic phases of a woman's life) which again is not immediate and independent enough to attract like a study of Liebermann's of whom Tompkins now and then reminds us.

One of these pictures portrays a young girl seated at a table, looking over some keepsakes. The painter has understood how to impart almost a soul to the inanimate objects, such as an envelope, some faded flowers, a piece of lace, strewn on the table. With a remarkable bit of fine taste and intuition, he placed a vase of roses, the flower of love, wrapt in a dim, misty atmosphere in the background.

In his portraits he is very unequal. Sometimes they are good and occasionally bad. There is often a lack of taste in the arrangement and the sketches are generally more effective than the finished pictures. Tompkins' idea of portrait painting—to make an exact copy of the sitter—is not infallible as his own experience shows. He only succeeds in making a portrait interesting when he is interested in the sitter.

By far more powerful he appears in expressing the sentiment of motherly love. There are more than half a dozen canvasses treating this subject, two of which are particularly characteristic. The first depicts a rustic mother betraying in her whole figure and the joyful expression of her face that all her thoughts are with her child. The second type of motherhood is represented by a delicate and refined looking lady, with New England reminiscences in her dress, sitting listlessly at the cradle from which her thoughts have wandered far away. In the conception of these figures Tompkins is guided not so much by observation and poetic thought as by a refined instinct, which is also one of the interesting features of the artist himself. Tompkins is not versatile. His creativeness is based on three or four deep fundamental lines of his character. All monotony, however, to which this simplicity, one is almost inclined to call it heaviness at times, would necessarily expose him, is avoided by his subjectivity, which is rich and deep enough to render every new picture bearing on the subject an interesting addition to the psychology of maternal feeling.

These pictures serve as a link between his young girls in their waking dreams and his unfinished Hester Prynne, in work at present. As Tompkins is a very conscientious worker, continually altering while painting, one cannot pronounce a final verdict on this picture, which is undoubtedly des-

tined to become one of his masterpieces. (For my part I am especially interested to know whether he will succeed in his struggles to give to Hester Prynne's face, what one might term, a typical expression of suffering womanhood. Something like the faces of Bastien Lepage's "Jean d'Arc" and the peasant woman in "Les Foirs." With this picture there is a chance for him to become a great artist, enjoying an art historical significance.)

"Good Friday" was another step in Tompkins' artistic development. Again the subject is a young, plainly dressed girl of the middle classes, who kneels over a crucifix, laid on black cloth against the foot of an altar, in the act of kissing the feet of the Saviour. Through the simple background of columns one catches a glimpse of a shining altar and a praying multitude. The fascination of this picture lies in a deeply rooted (one could hardly call it religious) sentiment which speaks from every part, the background as well as the figure, and reminds one of Israel's gift of imbueing the most commonplace objects with poetic sentiment.

We now approach his last work which still stands on the easel. It bears the title "After glow."

It is a twilight scene. A road, lined on the right with cottages, bearing a strong resemblance to High Street, Brookline, loses itself in slight undulations in the distance, where a mass of houses, with numerous lights suggests the never ceasing tumult of city life. The sun has set in vehement red and orange colors under a greenish sky with dark blueish gray clouds. In the foreground a priest with choir boys, carrying lighted lanterns and crucifix (only half the figure of the priest is visible) return from a funeral of some poor soul wrapt like the day in silent darkness. The patch of scant vegetation with a pool of water to the left, the barren road, the dark cottages looking like the abodes of peasants, with an occasional flickering light in the dim windows or streaming through a half-opened door, appear like the vague desire of sad, struggling humanity for something brighter beyond the grave. And the same feeling is unconsciously worked out in the coloring, the blueish gray tone of the picture longs, so to say, to be relieved by the fierce colors of the sunset. It is a picture of endless suggestions that appeals to the poetic mind, before which we can dream and experience a desire to fold our hands, however unbelieving we may be. Like "The Worshippers" and "Good Friday" it is an utterance of the ideal religious feeling of our age, a reverence for everything that may be sacred to one or the other human being; and this same reverence, which is the quintessence of Tompkin's artistic character, has, in connection with his technique, invested him with the power to assist the Löfftz school to overcome and idealize naturalism, and to give to America the benefit of mature works of art, which have taken Germany almost a century to develop.